

THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES-IMPERATIVE REQUIREMENT OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

Abstract

Together with the global economic crisis, the impact of organizational crises on human capital and its performances has become increasingly obvious. From this perspective, the strategic role of human resources' development is crucial. This development can help the organizational management to improve their operational abilities, that allow a better management of the existing crises and also preventing future one. Most researchers agree that the strategic development of human resources implies systematical processes, formal ones, to be adapted to the needs at the organizational level.

Keywords: strategic development of human resources, managing the institutional crisis, work climate, organizational stress.

JEL CODES: CO2; D2D23; H8H83; J5J53; O1O15; Z1Z13.

DEZVOLTAREA STRATEGICĂ A RESURSELOR UMANE-CERINȚĂ IMPERATIVĂ A REFORMEI ADMINISTRAȚIEI PUBLICE

Cristina MANOLE

Lecturer Ph.D., Administration and Public Management
Faculty, Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies
E-mail: cristina_manole68@yahoo.com

Rezumat

Odată cu declanșarea crizei economice mondiale, impactul crizelor organizaționale asupra capitalului uman și a performanțelor acestuia a devenit din ce în ce mai evident. Din această perspectivă, rolul strategic al dezvoltării resurselor umane este primordial. Această dezvoltare poate ajuta managementul organizațiilor să-și perfecționeze capacitățile operaționale, ce permit o mai bună gestionare a crizelor existente, cât și prevenirea celor viitoare. Majoritatea cercetătorilor sunt de acord că dezvoltarea strategică a resurselor umane implică procese sistematice, formale, ce trebuie adaptate la nevoile organizației

Cuvinte cheie: dezvoltarea strategică a resurselor umane, gestionarea crizelor instituționale, climatul muncii, stres organizațional.



Proceedings of the seventh Administration
and Public Management International
Conference

1. THEORETICAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

In the context of economic crisis, when organizations go through turmoil and changes at different levels, the strategic human resource development (DSRU) may provide a useful conceptual framework for the organizations' management (leadership teams) in order to better manage the crisis manifested at the institutional level (Wang, Hutchins and Garavan, 2009). According to experts, the strategic development of human resources has to promote practices which improve individual performance, of each employee, as well as the global one, reached at the organizational level (Garavan et al., 1995). However, the strategic development of human resources emphasizes the proactive management change, which enables organizations to survive in an increasingly complex environment, unstable, competitive and global (Grieves, 2003). In fact, it is argued that the strategic approach of human resource development is an imperative request in the globalization era. Thus, strategic perspective implies creating and implementing policies and human resource development practices which can ensure their contribution to acquiring the organizational goals (Davenport, Prusak and Wilson, 2003; Garavan, 2007; Zula and Chermack, 2007).

At the same time, Garavan (2007) emphasizes on several sets of human resource development strategies, namely: a) those that focus on performance of the organization, b) those who regard organizational learning and c) those aimed at the organizational change.

Most researchers agree that the strategic development of human resources implies systematical processes, formal ones, to be adapted to the needs at the organizational level. However, this development can help the organizational management to improve their operational abilities, meaning all the specific skills and competencies that allow a better management of the existing crises and also preventing future ones (Wang, Hutchins and Garavan, 2009).

The organizations may face more difficulties on the operational capabilities, for example:

- the lack of adequate knowledge in crises' management (Sayegh et al., 2004);
- the lack of awareness regarding threats to business continuity (Dahlhamer and D'Souza, 1997);
- the inability to follow the respondents' instructions to the crisis when the incident occurs (Perry and Mankin, 2005);

- the lack of psychological skills to cope and lack of decision-making skills (Gaudin and Thorne, 2001).

Given the difficulties mentioned and the fact that, as stated above, the strategic approach of human resource development is a requirement in the globalization era, we can say that the employees' continuous training is essential. If, decades ago, young graduates gained a profession following the aptitudes and knowledge learned in schools, nowadays the stock of knowledge, skills, professional aptitudes, accumulated over time, are fast stalling. The existence of employees who are no longer able to keep up, professionally, with the mutations occurring in the activities' conduct at the organizational level, is a major problem for the managers.

The main objective in this area is to provide skill and experience, so that optimal performance is obtained using the most appropriate and safe methods. In doing so, a very important role is held by the strategies and personnel policies, since modernizing work processes does not ensure economic efficiency, if there is not taken into consideration the training of personnel too. In order to improve professional training it is also felt the need for action in (Manole, 2006):

- knowledge, as accurate, of the demand for training and its evolution;
- the establishment of a clear record regarding the training of employees in each organization;
- information for those interested upon the possibilities of training;
- motivating employees and helping those who wish to improve their training;
- creating a training plan of action;
- coordinating the continuous professional development actions without breaking the initiatives.

2. THE STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSIONS

Strategy, structure, culture and leadership are the four internal dimensions of the organization, explaining the strategic development of human resources contribution to crisis management.

1. According to experts, many organizations do not develop **strategies** in a planned manner, but often are adopted due to the time period (Wang, Hutchins and Garavan, 2009). In organizations where strategy is planned, the emphasis is on formal competence (Badarocco, 1991). Thus, this approach of strategy can be reflected in formal (regarding human resource), such as training courses and learning interventions, giving the organization the ability to be

flexible, adaptable and efficient in responding to crises when they occur (Wang, Hutchins and Garavan, 2009).

Transforming public organizations in the context of modernizing the administration is done through five strategies that reflect the role of the five main mechanisms of the administration: (1) goals (2) incentives, (3) responsibility (4) power and (5) organizational culture (Moldoveanu, 2005). Thus, each strategy proposes some methods that may or may not be required (see table 1).

TABLE 1 – THE FIVE STRATEGIES PROPOSED FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

| MECHANISMS | STRATEGY | PROCEDURES |
|----------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Goals | Strategy at the central level | Clarity in objectives Clarity in establishing roles Clarity in followed directions |
| Incentives | Consequences' strategy | Managed competition Private company management Management by results |
| Responsibility | Client's strategy | Freedom of choice for the customer Choosing the conditions of competition Quality assurance for the customer |
| Power | Strategy of control | Organisms' capacity Employee's capacity Community's capacity |
| Culture | Strategy of culture | Changing habits Changing the affective ties Changing attitudes |

2. **The organization's structure** has many aspects that are relevant in shaping the crisis management efforts, evidenced at the institutional level and the contribution that strategic human resource development can have. Thus, structural dynamics can be incorporated into several conflictual tendencies: centralization versus decentralization, control versus flexibility, coordination versus fragmentation (Hillyard, 2000). However, organizational structures have a direct influence on the behavior of individuals and groups. In terms of individuals, structures may generate satisfaction or dissatisfaction, psychological disturbances, in a word **organizational stress**.

RESEARCH METHOD

For more precise knowledge of stress factors within the organization and their effects on human resources can be applied, as a mean of research, the questionnaire survey. This may reveal a series of individual problems related to the impact of the organizational structure and group structure on each employee. The questionnaire, as a research method, can use several types of questions - direct and

indirect, open and closed, selection and control, etc. - which will allow continuous assessment of the obtained answers. Questions can be grouped into a series of "packages", according to coverage, to facilitate and simplify quantification and their final interpretation as follows (Caramete, 2002):

PACKAGES OF QUESTIONS FOR SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

1. Identification questions:
 - a) age;
 - b) sex;
 - c) marital status;
 - d) position;
2. Questions about stress factors inside the organization and outside the organization:
 - a) To what extent the pace of family life events affect your professional work? (open question)
 - b) Do you think that marital status has an influence on work performance? (open question)
 - c) The income earned from work is sufficient to ensure the existence of your family? (open question, dichotomy)
 - d) Do you consider that there are inequities in determining your salary level? (open question, dichotomy)
 - e) Do you agree with the penalties? (closed question, dichotomy)
 - f) Are you satisfied with the advancement opportunities you have in the team? (closed question, dichotomy)
 - g) Which are the factors that determine the advancement in your team? (open question)
 - h) Are you satisfied with the microclimate conditions in which you work (lighting, noise, pollution, etc...)? (open question)
 - i) Are you consulted or participate in decision-making process within the team? (closed question, dichotomy)
3. Questions about stress factors related to the professional group:
 - a) Do you work in a united team? (closed question, dichotomy)

- b) What do you think are the causes of internal conflicts, within the team you work in? (open question)
- c) Is there a fair distribution of workload in the team? (closed question, dichotomy)
- d) What influences the incorrect allocation of professional duties? (open question, selection)
- e) Do you think your direct superior, performs correctly his tasks? (closed question, trichotomy)
- f) Do you think that the resources of the team you are part of are used at the maximum level? (closed question, dichotomy, control)
- g) What suggestions do you have for an efficient use of the resources in the team? (open question, control)
- 4. Questions about stress factors related to the individual:
 - a) Do you think the professional tasks correspond to your training level? (closed question, dichotomy)
 - b) Do you think that other colleagues receive tasks according to their training? (closed question, dichotomy, control)
 - c) Do you have proposals regarding collective tasks sharing? (open question, control)
 - d) Have you attended some form of professional development within your team? (closed question, dichotomy)
 - e) Do you think professional training is needed? (closed question, dichotomy, control)
 - f) In which situation would you leave the team you work in? (open question)
 - g) If the collective you work in work would be in a difficult situation, would you choose a different institution? (closed question, dichotomy)
 - h) In case of personal problems (illness, complex family problems, etc ...) are supported by the team you work in? (closed question, dichotomy)

The question packages are grouped by the structure of the survey, therefore it will allow subjects to give more complete responses avoiding the psychological blockage generated by potential fears in the face of supposed consequences. For this reason, questions can be rotated in the questionnaire without taking into account the packages in which they were structured.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are you satisfied with the microclimate conditions (lighting, noise, pollution, etc.) you work in?
2. The income earned from work is sufficient to ensure the existence of your family?
3. Do you agree with the fines system (penalties)?
4. Do you think that there are inequities in determining your salary level?
5. Do you work in a united team?
6. There is a fair distribution of workload in the team?
7. Do you think that team resources you are part of are used up to the maximum?
8. What suggestions do you have for effective use of resources in the team?
9. Do you think your direct superior respond correctly fulfills his duties?
10. Do you think your professional tasks correspond to your training level?
11. Do you think that marital status has any influence on business performance?
12. To what extent the pace of family life events affect your professional work?
13. Have you attended some form of professional training in your team?
14. Do you think professional training is needed?
15. Are you satisfied with advancement opportunities you have in the team?
16. Which are the factors that determine the advancement in your team?
17. Do you think that other colleagues receive tasks according to their training?
18. Do you have proposals on burden-sharing group?
19. Are you consulted or participate in decision-making process within the team?
20. What do you think are the causes of internal conflicts within the staff where you work?
21. In which situation would you leave the team you work in?
22. If your working team would be in a difficult situation would you choose another institution?
23. In case of personal problems (illness, complex family problems, etc...) are you supported by the team you work in?

24. Age;
25. Sex;
26. Marital status;
27. Position.

From the groups perspective, structures can generate high or low cohesion, intensive or limited communication (Moldoveanu, 2005). In terms of group cohesion (team), one can say that when it occurs between individuals with different cultural affiliation, it will become highly efficient, because the heterogeneity of components, due to these affiliations, can become stimulant within a general framework and a common motivation to the task, allowing an efficient division of roles and hence a more dynamic team (Manole, 2006). From the perspective of communication, it requires the existence and effective functioning of a communication network adapted to the nature of the task and use it to its maximum potential by the team members, also interpersonal communication must be done without obstacles or work-related inhibition on all the ways of this network (Manole, 2006).

Smith (1995) and Elliott (2006) noted that, in terms of crisis resolution is not sufficient to consider only the decisional effect, but also the manner in which the organizational structure and culture influence the decision-making process. In conclusion, we can say that an effective organizational structure is created based on objectives set at the global level, from the tools and processes required to achieve them, through accurate knowledge of the structure components (position, leadership rules, compartment, organizational relations, hierarchical level) (Manole, 2006).

3. **The organizational culture**, an important internal dimension, existing at institutional level can be the basis for crisis management (Wang, Hutchins and Garavan, 2009). Also, the integration of culture in an organization structure is extremely important in terms of the issues that arise. "The metaphor of the iceberg", launched in 1990 by French and Bell correctly captures the two contrasting aspects of organization structure, the first being composed of elements with formal character, and the second from largely informal nature elements which require careful research from experts as the informal forms the largest part of the organization (Moldoveanu, 2005). As an iceberg, the informal aspects can not be brought to the attention of specialists but only when they cause malfunctions at the organizational level (see image 1).

| |
|--|
| Formal Organization Objectives Strategy Structure Procedural Systems Artificial products Financial Resources Management Human Resources |
| Informal Organization Values, attitudes, beliefs Leadership style Rules of conduct Power Organization's policy Conflicts Informal groups |

FIGURE 1 - ORGANIZATIONAL ICEBERG

- Alongside the strategy, structure and organizational culture, **leadership** has a major influence on the strategic development of human resources, with an important role in managing crises, expressed at the institutional level and in the private sector. One might say that leadership is a vector of development, so its role should not be reduced, nor overrated. The strategic side of leadership is an objective one, consisting of working activities and / or administrative, which compose the economy and organization's structure. Approaching this side of leadership means a detailed analysis, precision, rigor, etc. The subjective aspect (human) of leadership is constituted based on the organizational culture and individual spirit. In fact, in reality, no one can speak of an organizational culture unless a number of individuals think and act as a leader, if in an organization there are enough people with a genuine leader mentality (Moldoveanu, 2005). (see image 2).

The leader of a working group should have a number of qualities, without which the work becomes inefficient (Manole, 2006). He must be pleasant, to assess the fulfillment of professional duties, resulting in a hierarchy based on employee performance, to oversee the work completed. The official leader's action becomes extremely important to its members because, according to his conclusions (embodied in the hierarchy of the group members), they get their material satisfactions and moral rewards, those that ensure the prestige of the team. A leader unable to realize the performance level of employees, depending on the proposed objectives, risks being isolated by the group, under the influence of informal, opinion leaders. The leader's attitude is important also in the use of full working capacity of the staff that he manages. Therefore, engaging the "isolated" may lead to an improvement in efficiency,

while the leader knows how to manipulate existing psychological personalities in the group, making even those who seem to feel marginalized to feel important in the team's functioning.

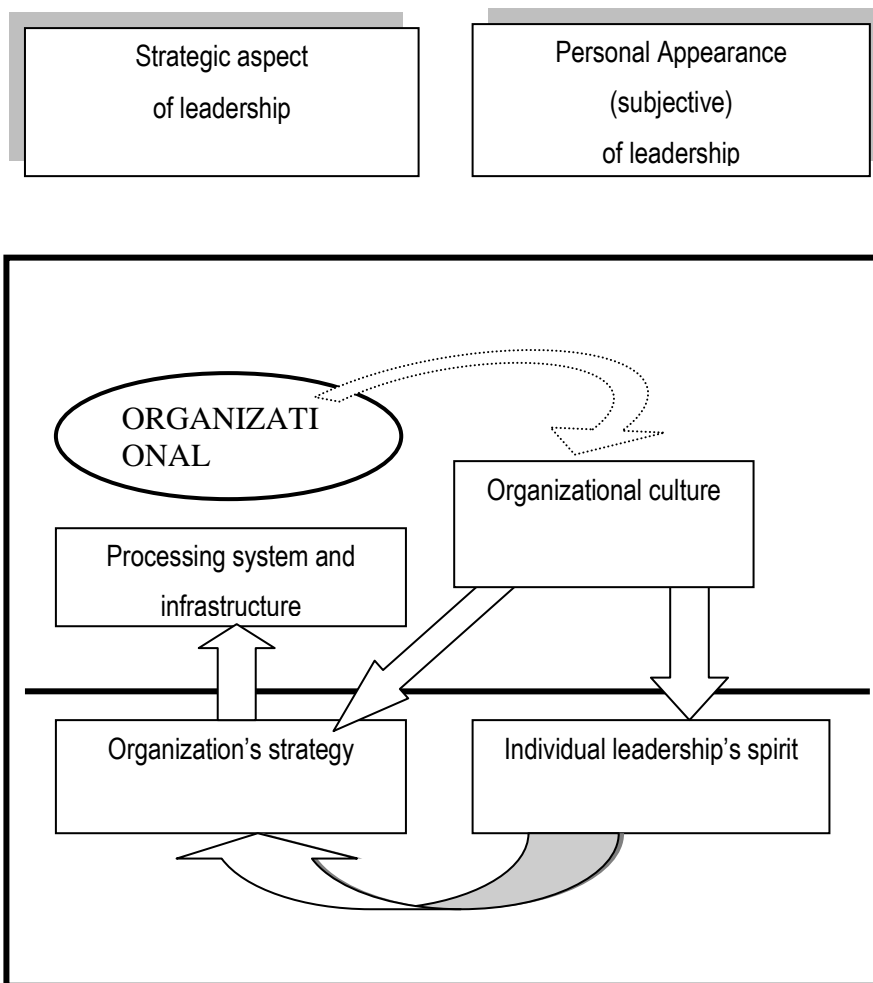


FIGURE 2 - IMPLICATIONS OF STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

We saw above that the structure of the organization can generate a high or low cohesion in the working groups, which also is influenced by how the group climate functions, by the manner in which the leader enforce rules, group values, penalizing the nonconformists.

RESEARCH METHOD

In order to investigate the labor climate and quantifying human affective relations, in a formed professional group, the sociometric method is applicable representing a set of processes and mathematic and graphic techniques – the test and sociometric, the target sociogramm (Caramete, 2002).

The test is designed from the perspective of emotional climate, even to achieve the sociogram, obtaining individual scores signifying the group structure and type of status of its members. As a test that seeks to capture the role of work climate, its orientation is made in the beginning, towards the activities involved the specific area, which includes the groups analyzed.

Thus, each group member is asked to express their preference (and denials) on the choice (and rejection) of other members of the group to accompany him in a professional activity, such as completion of work on specific problems or analyzing data needed to develop projects to improve the organization.

The test requires the appointment of the first three members (+3; +2; +1) that the employee would like to have as collaborators, and the first three members (-3, -2, -1) and he would not like to work on professional tasks.

The test requires also a member of each group to present its views on those who believe that elected him and those who rejected it for the same type of activity. The answers to such questions are represented in the sociogram, which provides an insight into the existing affective structure by revealing who the "star" of the group (the member converging toward positive choices), who are the "isolated" (the group members who obtain a score equal to "0"), the "rejected" (those who receive negative scores), which are the "mutual" elections.

SOCIOMETRIC TEST MODEL

1. If, for next week, you have to do a job on specific issues for the team that you belong, which of your colleagues would you like to do it with? Name the top three of them (+3; +2; +1).
2. In the same work, which are the colleagues you would not work with? Name three of them (-3, -2, -1).
3. Regarding the completion of the work, which are the colleagues you think chose you to be a collaborator? Name three of them
4. Which are the colleagues that you think did not choose you to collaborate with them in completing the work? Name three of them.

Within the sociometric table (see table 2) that reflects the results of the test, the situation of the reviewed group can be balanced or, conversely, unbalanced, because of the leader's formal personality (official), which can be also the informal leader (unofficial). However, the analyst notes with "+" preference relations among group members and "-" reject relations between them. Sociometric

statements made in the table after applying the test, are plotted with the help of the target sociograma (Caramete, 2002)(see image3).

EXTRACT FROM THE SOCIOMETRIC TABLE

TABLE 2

| NR. CRT. | MEMBERS | COLECTIVE MEMBERS | | | | | | | |
|----------|------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|------|------|
| | | IC | GV | DA | PH | SI | | FG | SP |
| 1. | IC | | 3 | 2 | -3 | +1 | | | |
| 2. | GV | 3 | | 2 | | | | -1 | -2 |
| 3. | DA | 3 | 1 | | | 2 | | -3 | -2 |
| 4. | PH | 1 | 2 | | | -1 | | | -3 |
| 5. | SI | | | 1 | | | | -2 | -1 |
| · | · | · | · | · | · | | | · | · |
| · | · | · | · | · | · | | | · | · |
| · | · | · | · | · | · | | | · | · |
| · | · | · | · | · | · | | | · | · |
| 16. | FG | 3 | 1 | -2 | 1 | | | | |
| 17. | SP | 3 | 1 | -2 | 2 | | | | |
| | SCORE "+"/"-" | 30/-7 | 11/-8 | 10/-4 | 8/-4 | 3/-2 | | 2/-6 | 2/-8 |
| | TOTAL SCORE | 21 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 1 | | -4 | -6 |

NOTE: "DA" is the formal leader (official) of the team analyzed. "IC" is the informal leader (unofficial), since it gained the highest positive score (21).

The extract from the sociometric table reads as follows:

1. "IC" preferred "GV"(+3), "DA"(+2) and "SI"(+1) and rejected "PH"(-3);
2. "GV" preferred "IC"(+3), and "DA"(+2) and rejected "SP"(-2) and "FG"(-1),etc.

The target sociograma corresponding to the sociometric table looks as below:

TARGET SOCIOGRAMA

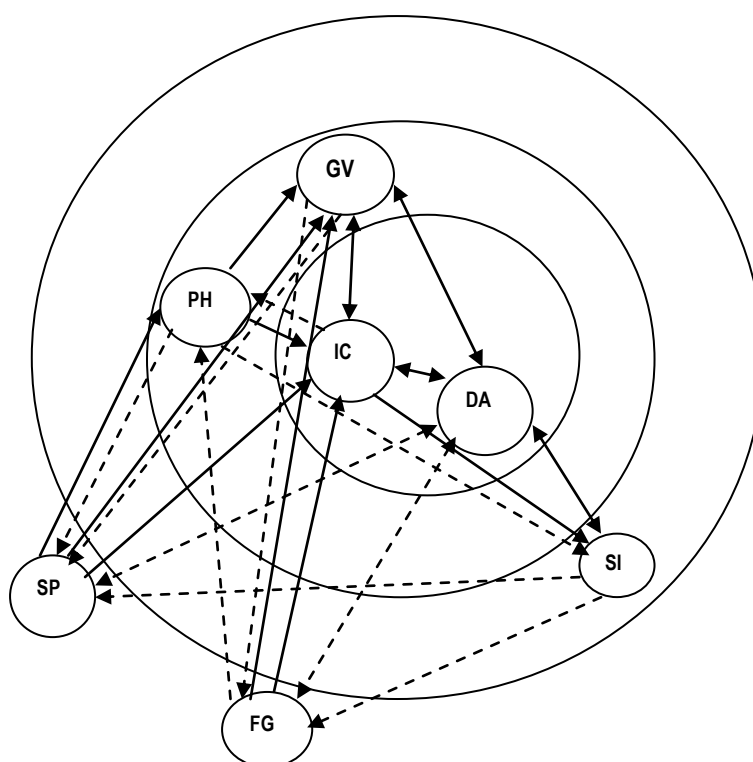


FIGURE 3

Legend:

teleelement "+" —————>

teleelement "-" - - - - ->

mutual attraction <====>

mutual rejection <- - - - ->

The teleelement is the preferred psychological link between individuals and is the simplest unit of feeling transmitted from one person to another. It can express positive, negative or indifferent relationships (Caramete, 2002).

3. CONCLUSIONS

In this study, I join human resource management professionals and organizational analysis, arguing the importance of the four major internal components of the organization - strategy, structure, culture and leadership - in the strategic development of human capital, the latter having an essential role in dealing with crises that arise at the organizational level. The four dimensions are intertwined, being extremely important in terms of issues that arise at the organizational level, demonstrating the absolute influence over decision-making process by managers. It is correct to say that leaders are those who give legitimacy to the strategic development of human resources, and also on crisis management, manifested at the organizational level. Situations, conflicts, pressure generated by major events, involve a group of professional solidarity with a view to overcoming them, in a maximum effort (Caramete, 2002).

The leader must stimulate the group climate and by changing his attitude, towards the group members under the pressure of events, the action context changes. In such situations the leader's style becomes extremely important for the others. A situational pressure may include, for example, the transition from a democratic to an authoritarian style, adopting an anarchic style threatening to weaken the capacity of effort solidarity within. Although prominent individuals, members of professional groups have psycho-physiological effort capacities and different resistance to situational pressure. They can not also when involved in perceiving the "hot" event to have the vision of the overall importance in the economy and not even always notice the attitudinal orientation of the organization. An effective genuine leader, assumes to reduce the stress caused by these views, eliminating the sources of internal conflict favored in the group members' competition (Caramete, 2002).

All these aspects result from the research that I conducted while on work climate, human relations, affective relations that exist across work groups (teams) and the work-related stress using the research methods described above, inside this study (questionnaire survey, sociometric test and target sociograma).

REFERENCES

- Badarocco, J.L. (1991). *The knowledge link: How firms compete through strategic alliances*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Caramete, C. (2002). *Study on organizational climate and work*, A.S.E Publishing House, Bucharest

- Dahlhamer, J.M. and D'Souza, M.J. (1997). Determinants of business disaster preparedness in two U.S. metropolitan areas. *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, 15(2), pp. 265-281.
- Davenport, T.H., Prusak, L. and Wilson, H.J. (2003). *What's the big idea? Creating and capitalizing on the best management thinking*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Elliott, D. (2006). *Crisis management into practice*. In D. Smith & D. Elliott (Eds.), *Key readings in crisis management* (pp. 393-414). New York: Routledge.
- Garavan, T.N. (2007). A strategic perspective on human resource development. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 9, pp. 11-30.
- Garavan, T.N., Costine, P. and Heraty, N. (1995). The emergence of strategic human resource development. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 19(10), pp. 4-10.
- Gaudin, A. and Thorne, L. (2001). Emotion and ethical decision making in organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 31, pp. 175-187.
- Grieves, J. (2003). *Strategic human resource development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hillyard, M.T. (2000). *Public crisis management, how and why organisations work together to solve society's most threatening problems*. San Jose, CA: Writers Press Club.
- Manole, C. (2006). *Human resources' management in public administration*, A.S.E. Publishing House, Bucharest.
- Moldoveanu, G. (2005). *Analysis and organizational behaviour*, Economical Publishing House, Bucharest.
- Perry, R.W. and Mankin, L.D. (2005). Preparing for the unthinkable: Manages, terrorism and the HRM function. *Public Personnel Management*, 34(2), pp. 175-193.
- Sayegh, L., Anthony, W.P. and Perrewew, P.L. (2004). Managerial decision making under crisis: The role of emotion in an intuitive decision process. *Human Resource Management Review*, 14, pp. 179-199.
- Smith, D. (1995). *The dark side of excellence: Managing strategic failures*. In J. Thompson (Ed.), *Handbook of strategic management* (pp. 161-191). London: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Wang, J., Hutchins, H.M. and Garavan, T.N. (2009). Exploring the Strategic Role of Human Resource Development in Organizational Crisis Management. *Human Resource Development Review*, 8, pp. 22-53.
- Zula, K.J. and Chermack, T.J. (2007). Human capital planning: A review of literature and implications for human resource development. *Human Resource Development Review*, 6, pp. 245-262.